

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 149817
ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN:DWELTER:NAB
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S/S-O:WILLIAM ROPE
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 149817

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, CAST, HUM, NU

SUBJECT: SHELTON-SOMOZA MEETING 6/1, NEW YORK

SUMMARY: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHELTON ACCOMPANIED BY DESK OFFICER DWELTER MET WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA AND AMBASSADOR SEVILLA-SACASA AT THE PRESIDENT'S WALDORF TOWERS SUITE FOR APPROXIMATELY 1 HR. AND 40 MIN. THE BROAD RANGING DISCUSSION OF U.S.-NICARAGUAN RELATIONS WAS CHARACTERIZED BY AN ATMOSPHERE OF NON-RANCOROUS CANDOR. PRESIDENT SOMOZA APPEARED RELAXED AND COMPLETELY CONVERSANT WITH THE ISSUES. HIS POSTURE THROUGHOUT THE MEETING WAS ONE OF REASON AND CALM, SEEKING CLARIFICATION OF U.S. POSITIONS WHILE STATING THOSE OF HIS GOVERNMENT WITH CONSIDERABLE ELOQUENCE.
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 149817

ALTHOUGH LITTLE NEW GROUND WAS COVERED, BOTH SIDES APPEARED SATISFIED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO HOLD THE DISCUSSIONS.

1. AFTER AN EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTRIES SOMOZA QUERIED SHELTON ABOUT THE U.S. POSITION TOWARD HIS GOVERNMENT, EXPRESSING PUZZLEMENT AT WHAT EXACTLY WE DESIRED OF HIM. HE STATED THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD MADE APPROPRIATE RESPONSES AND INITIATIVES THEY HAVE NOT SEEMED SUFFICIENT TO RECTIFY

THE STRAIN IN U.S.-NICARAGUA RELATIONS. SHELTON REFERRED

TO THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED U.S. INTENTION TO PROCEED WITH THE A.I.D. NUTRITION LOAN, OTHER SMALLER GRANTS, AND THE LIKELIHOOD THAT, BARRING TECHNICAL PROBLEMS, WE WOULD FOLLOW SUIT WITH APPROVAL OF THE EDUCATION LOAN. SOMOZA ACKNOWLEDGED THESE POSITIVE ACTIONS AS STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION BUT COMPLAINED ABOUT THE WORDING OF THE EMBASSY'S PRESS RELEASE REGARDING THE LOANS WHICH STATED THAT OUR DECISION TO PROCEED WAS NOT MEANT AS A SIGN OF POLITICAL SUPPORT. SHELTON REPLIED THAT THIS WAS STATED SINCE THE OBJECTIVE OF THE LOANS AND GRANTS IS TO BENEFIT THE BASIC HUMAN NEEDS OF THE POOR AND REITERATED THE USG POSITION OF NON-INTERVENTION IN THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF NICARAGUA.

2. MS. SHELTON ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED SOME PROGRESS IN THE GON'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, PARTICULARLY DURING 1977. HOWEVER, SHE POINTED OUT THAT THE USG REMAINS CONCERNED AT UNRESOLVED HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS AND REPORTS OF NEW ABUSES, SPECIFICALLY RAISING THE RECENT TEMPORARY CLOSING OF 5 RADIO STATIONS. SOMOZA RESPONDED THAT HE AGREED T AT THIS WAS NOT THE PROPER MANNER TO MONITOR THE MEDIA AND STATED THAT HE FAVORED REVISION OF THE RADIO/T.V. CODE. HE DID NOT COMMENT

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 149817

DIRECTLY ON REPORTS OF NEW ABUSES.

3. EXPRESSING HIS OPINION ON THE STATUS OF EFFORTS TO REVISE THE ELECTORAL LAWS, SOMOZA STATED THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY BACKED BILL HAD COMPLETED ITS FIRST PASSAGE THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE, THAT HE WAS REVIEWING THE BILL AND WOULD PRIVATELY DISCUSS IT WITH MEMBERS OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. MS. SHELTON EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE CURRENT POLITICAL IMPASSE SEEMED TO BE BENEFITTING THOSE ADVOCATING VIOLENCE. SHE REFERRED TO THE EMBASSY'S EFFORTS TO URGE THE OPPOSITION TO RESOLVE ITS DIFFERENCES THROUGH PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS. SOMOZA AGREED THIS WAS THE DESIRED APPROACH TO THE PRESENT SITUATION AND STATED HIS CONTINUED INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING A DIALOGUE WITH HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS REGRETTING THEIR GENERALLY UNRESPONSIVE ATTITUDE TO DATE IN ASSISTING THE GOVERNMENT TO BRING ABOUT DESIRED REFORMS. HE MENTIONED HIS STATED INTENT TO RELINQUISH BOTH THE PRESIDENCY AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL GUARD IN 1981 AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF HIS GOODWILL, COMMENTING THAT HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE TIME WHEN HE COULD DEVOTE HIMSELF TO PRIVATE PURSUITS.

4. RESPONDING TO SHELTON'S REFERENCE TO U.S. CONCERN THAT THE NATIONAL GUARD BECOME A FULLY PROFESSIONALIZED MILITARY HE COUNTERED THAT SUCH DEMANDS ARE BASELESS SINCE THE GUARD IS NOW AND HAS BEEN FOR YEARS A THOROUGHLY

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION WITH A REGULARIZED SYSTEM OF RANK AND PROMOTION.

5. MS. SHELTON EXPRESSED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S OPINION THAT THE GON'S EARLY INVITATION TO THE IAHRC IS DESIRABLE. SOMOZA REITERATED HIS PREVIOUSLY STATED POSITION FAVORING SUCH AN INVITATION, THE ONLY AREA IN QUESTION BEING THE TIMING. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD NOT BE PRESSURED INTO THIS ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA BUT WOULD
SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 149817

IMMEDIATELY RESPOND TO A REQUEST BY THE COMMISSION TO VISIT NICARAGUA BY ENTERING INTO DISCUSSIONS TO ARRIVE AT A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE DATE. SHELTON OPINED THAT SUCH AN INVITATION WOULD BE A TANGIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF GOODWILL ON THE PART OF THE GON TO RESOLVE LINGERING QUESTIONS AND DOUBTS AS TO THE STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NICARAGUA. THEREFORE, IT WOULD CLEARLY BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE GON. SOMOZA AGREED BUT COUNTERED BY REITERATING THAT HE MUST RETAIN THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE MOMENT FOR SUCH A HIGHLY POLITICAL AND POTENTIALLY UNSETTLING UNDERTAKING. SHELTON EMPHASIZED THE IMPACT THAT SUCH A VISIT WOULD HAVE IN THE U.S. SHE MENTIONED THE CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE OVER THE CONTINUATION O" IMET FOR NICARAGUA AND THE IMPACT SUCH AN INVITATION MIGHT HAVE ON THE CONGRESS. SOMOZA RESPONDED THAT HE IS INTERESTED IN CLARIFYING THE LINGERING ALLEGATIONS REGARDING HIS GOVERNMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AND HAS SO DEMONSTRATED BY THE RECENT VISIT OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND HIS PUBLICALLY STATED INTENT TO RECEIVE A VISIT BY THE IAHRC. HE CONTINUALLY RETURNED TO THE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE WHICH HE STATED PUT HIM IN A VERY DIFFICULT POSITION SINCE HE WISHED TO PROCEED WITH THE VISIT BUT REFUSED TO SUCCUMB TO FOREIGN INTERVENTION.

6. MR. WELTER ASKED IF HE INTENDED TO PURSUE HIS PREVIOUS ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION. HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTED BY THE REFUSAL OF THE MAJORITY OF THOSE APPOINTED TO SERVE STATING THAT THEY HAD AVOIDED THEIR DUTIES AS CITIZENS TO ASSIST IN THIS IMPORTANT MATTER. IN SPITE OF THIS SETBACK HE SAID HE INTENDS TO NAME ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUALS IN A FURTHER ATTEMPT TO FORM SUCH A COMMISSION. WHEN QUERIED AS TO WHETHER HE
SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 149817

WOULD EMPLOY THE SAME METHOD OF APPOINTING THE MEMBERS, NAMELY ANNOUNCING THEIR APPOINTMENT WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION, HE STATED THAT TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD

BE SEEN AS CONSULTING WITH THEM PRIVATELY AND COULD BE INTERPRETED AS NEGOTIATING A SPECTOR HE WISHED TO AVOID. SOMOZA THEN CONFIRMED THAT THE REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION OF DR. RAMOS WILL BE FORTHCOMING SHORTLY.

7. RESPONDING TO WELTER'S INQUIRY AS TO THE STATUS OF THE CHARITON CASE THE PRESIDENT STATED THAT IF HE WERE THE ONLY ONE CHARTION HAD SWINDLED HE WOULD SET HIM FREE. HOWEVER, SINCE HE HAS STOLEN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM SOME 400 STOCKHOLDERS OF THE BANK HE IS UNABLE TO FREE HIM. SOMOZA WAS REMINDED THAT WE WERE NOT ASKING THAT CHARITON BE SET FREE BUT RATHER THAT HE RECEIVE A PROMPT AND JUST TRIAL. SHELTON STATED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CONGRESSIONAL, PUBLIC, AND MEDIA INTEREST IN THE CHARITON CASE AND THAT THE GON'S HANDLING OF THIS MATTER WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE WIDESPREAD REPERCUSSIONS. SOMOZA ACKNOWLEDGED THIS FACT AND ENDED BY STATING THAT NICARAGUAN JUSTICE MOVES SLOWLY. CHRISTOPHER

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